

ORGANIZATION AND THE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL.*

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"How long will it last? What is going to keep the men together when they are organized?" These questions have been repeatedly asked of the writer, in the course of his organization work amongst California physicians, and he has necessarily given the matter much careful thought. The answer is not so difficult to find, if we stop and think why organization is progressing so rapidly. It is, obviously, because a lot of energy is being put into the work by a comparatively small number of men, scattered throughout the country. If an equal amount of energy is continuously put into the work, after organization is well accomplished, it will be maintained. In this world you get just about as much out of a thing as you put into it. You get mighty little for nothing. Granted a fully organized state medical society that sits calmly down and does nothing for its members, and in about two years it will have woefully shrunk. Given the same society constantly at work for its members, producing what they want and protecting them in every way that it can, the society feeling will remain strong and the organization will not lessen in numbers. An object lesson may perhaps be permitted. In California we give our members, annually, a Register and Directory of all physicians within the state; to non-members this book is sold for \$2.50; we give them a monthly JOURNAL; to non-members the subscription price is \$3.00. Thus a member receives that which has a face value of \$5.50 in return for his dues to the county society; in all but three or four cases these dues are but \$2.00 a year. The next problem is to make these publications actually worth their face value. The Register may be conceded; it is certainly worth \$2.50. There remains the JOURNAL, and this must be made so valuable to the physicians of the state that they would find it difficult to get along without it. It must be, first of all, *the* news-distributer of the state and must devote its first effort to getting news of county societies and their official transactions. It should be ever watchful of the whole state and country for those items which will be of greatest interest and benefit to the members outside of the larger cities. It should look steadily at the man who does *not* take half a dozen journals, but who is nonetheless a most important member—if not *the* most important member—of the society. That is the policy outlined by your editor and the policy which has been accepted by the journal of our far Western state.

But why cannot a private journal, publishing the State Association matters officially, do just as well? For a number of reasons. In the first

place, such a journal, the official organ of the organized members of the greatest of the learned professions within a given territory, should be absolutely and exclusively under the control of the professional organization itself. It must be absolutely free and independent, and this can never be if it is the property of some individual or company and not the property of the State Association. Any individual or company publishing a medical journal does so for but one thing—profit. Such being the case, and I think it may stand without discussion, dollars will ever be the first, rather than the last consideration. Right, too much under the influence of dollars, is very liable to take on a somewhat peculiar and mottled appearance, and the elasticity of rules or ethical provisions is apt to be somewhat stretched. Now while dollars should by no means be ignored in conducting a State Association journal, they should be the last and not the first consideration when any question of policy, of ethics or of professional conduct is to be considered. The State Association should have a mouth-piece (its journal) and through it should speak at all times to its members. It should speak with profound courage and utter straightout truths for the help and the guidance of its members, and for their protection. That a State journal may do these things and may adhere strictly to the right path in the matter of its advertising, and still build up enough productive pages to pay, has been demonstrated.

"It is equally derogatory to professional character for physicians to dispense or promote the use of secret remedies." That ethical principle is embodied in the document which was unanimously adopted, amidst great applause, at New Orleans last year. It is still in effect, I believe, yet it is weekly violated by almost every medical journal published in this country. There are some half-dozen exceptions. That medical journals "promote the use of secret remedies" when they advertise them to their readers, is incontrovertible; that they violate this principle of ethics in doing so, is equally beyond contention.

See where the influence of the State journal comes in. I am fully conversant with the facts in California, so will cite that territory as an example. The biggest medical weekly in the world, and the "greatest advertising medium for proprietary medicines in this country", reaches something under 500 doctors in California. The STATE JOURNAL, on the other hand, reaches over 1,500 doctors, and what is more, the STATE JOURNAL is *their* journal and they take an active interest in its every page and utterance. Doubtless conditions in Kentucky are about the same, and the *Association Bulletin* reaches several times as many doctors as does the *Journal of the A. M. A.* Its influence will therefore be several

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times as great as is that of the larger journal, and it should be always, as it is now, for the best and for what is right, irrespective of any commercial influence. The State Association journal is more than a medical journal; it is the means of communication among the members of a large family. It is the organ of the county society as well as of the State Association, and as such comes so intimately into relations with every member that its influence cannot but be great.

It has been said that to speak the fearless truth is a luxury that few can afford. This may be true. Certainly it entails trouble to the speaker. But ought not a great and powerful organization of medical men such as is represented by your State Association—ought not such an organization to have some absolutely untrammelled and unbiased means of speaking much needed truths? Can you not afford the luxury of continuing the good work you have undertaken? All people, no matter what their walk in life or their life's work, need constant instruction in their duty and in those things which pertain to the best and the right work. Therefore we have trade journals of all kinds; therefore we should have a medical journal, owned and controlled by the State Association, in every state in the Union.

But many large advertisers do not like a medical journal that tells the truth. True; and we have incurred the enmity of some such. But we have also gained the friendship of many others, and we have gained the approval of our members. The component societies which go to make up our State Society, way out here on the shores of the broad Pacific, have begun to officially adopt resolutions pledging themselves to the right policy, and in due course all of them will probably act.

Not only should it be the duty of every State Association to publish its own journal, but to my mind it is the only way in which full and complete organization can be secured, and when secured, maintained. The problem of keeping up interest and maintaining the medical organization is a large one. Your editor has the major portion of the work on his shoulders, for your journal must accomplish the task. He will have much work and plenty of criticism; but he is well endowed with those qualities which go to make for success, and he can handle the situation. He has given you a good journal to start with; help him to give you a good journal for many years to come, and so help yourselves.

CORRECTION IN PRELIMINARY PROGRAM.

On page 101, in the Scientific Program, under "Surgery and Anatomy," the title of Dr. Terry's paper should read "Cases of" instead of "Codes of."

Under "Obstetrics" the author's name should be Charlotte J. Baker, San Diego.

MEDICAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE.

In response to the request of the Chairman of the National Committee, the representative of the auxiliary Committee for California, Dr. Philip Mills Jones, telegraphed to the President and wrote to the senators and representatives of California in Washington, urging the appointment of Col. Gorgas upon the Panama Canal Commission. The County representatives were also requested to take similar action, and it is hoped that they did so promptly. While the request came too late to do any good, at present, it may have some effect eventually. At any rate, it is just as well to get the newly installed machinery of organization oiled up and try the wheels before the great occasion arises.

ALAMEDA COUNTY ANNUAL DINNER.

On the evening of March 8th, the Alameda County Medical Association gave its annual dinner, which was, as usual, a great success. The dinner was given at the Athenian Club, in Oakland, and the large table was well filled. Dr. Maher presided and was a most felicitous toast-master. Several guests from San Francisco were present and it was noted that most of them did not try to escape until barely time for the last boat. The annual dinner is an excellent institution and should be encouraged; it does vastly more to promote harmony and good feeling than the casual observer would suppose. It is also an excellent idea to invite the editor of the JOURNAL; that also promotes harmony.

MEETING OF HEALTH OFFICIALS.

On Saturday, March 12, there was a joint meeting of representatives of the Federal, State and San Francisco health authorities held at the office of the Marine Hospital Laboratory. The Marine Hospital Service was represented by Past Assistant Surgeon Dr. Rupert Blue, Dr. O'Neill and Dr. Matheson; the State Board of Health by Dr. M. Regensburger and Dr. N. K. Foster; the local Board by Dr. J. W. Ward, Dr. D. F. Ragan and Dr. W. C. Hassler. The condition of Chinatown, in San Francisco, was the chief subject under discussion, and the reports of inspecting officers went to show that the district is in a very much more sanitary condition than it was some months ago, the improvement having been accomplished since the various health departments have been working harmoniously together.

SPITTING ON TRANSFERS.

Just after the last number of the JOURNAL was closed and ready for the press, a member of the Publication Committee noticed the following telegraphic note, which is so directly in line with one of our editorials of last month that it is here reprinted:

LOCKJAW CAUSED BY CUT FROM TRANSFER.

New York, Feb. 18.—Lockjaw caused by a cut on the hand from a transfer slip has caused the death of George Powers, a street-car conductor here. The cut was sustained two weeks ago while Powers was tearing the slip from his book for a passenger.

In this connection the Board of Health has issued a mandate forbidding conductors to moisten their fingers with saliva in order to separate the transfers before delivering them to passengers. Fears of disseminating disease germs caused the board's action.

The University of Munich is reported to have been opened to women students on the same basis as men. The gymnasium course and certificate are required of those who are recognized as regular students; those not having these requirements are admitted merely as "hearers."